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# Message Text

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44
ACTION ARA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, BR, OTRA
SUBJ: VISIT OF CNPQ PRESIDENT DION

REF: BRASILIA 1160

FYI IN CONNECTION WITH SUBJECT VISIT, FOLLOWING IS
FREE TRANSLATION OF EXCERPTS FROM VEJA MAGAZINE
(2/18/76) INTERVIEW WITH DION ON SUBJECT OF ROLE
OF CNPQ:
SINCE THE 50'S, THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL HAS
GONE THROUGH TWO PHASES. DURING MORE THAN TWO
DECADES AND FOLLOWING NO SPECIFIC GUIDELINES, IT
ONLY MADE RESEARCH GRANTS AND AWARDED FELLOWSHIPS.
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 70'S, AN AMBITIOUS PLAN WAS
ELABORATED - THE FIRST BASIC PLAN OF SCIENTIFIC AND
TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT - WELL FUNDED BUT LACKING
ORGANIZATION. FINALLY, IN 1975, THE PIAUI BORN
ENGINEER JOSE DION DE MELO TELES, 36 YEARS, CNPQ'S
DIRECTOR, DECIDED TO RESTRUCTURE THE COUNCIL ON
DIFFERENT BASES AND UNDER A NEW TITLE: NATIONAL
COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT,
THOUGH MAINTAINING THE SAME ACRONYM. IN THE
FOLLOWING INTERVIEW, ENGINEER DION EXPLAINS CNPQ'S
FUNCTIONS TO VEJA'S REPORTER PEDRO AYRES.
VEJA: WHY THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE CNPQ?
DION: THE CNPQ WAS CREATED DURING THE POST-WAR
YEARS. WHEN AN INTENSE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT
TOOK PLACE. AT THAT TIME THERE AROSE AN ENTHUSIASM
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FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THAT AFFECTED US. HOWEVER,

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THERE WAS A LACK OF AN EFFECTIVE, SOCIAL SENSITIVITY
FOR THE UTILIZATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. FOR
THAT REASON, THE COUNCIL REMAINED INACTIVE DURING A
CERTAIN TIME AND APPLIED ITSELF BASICALLY TO FOSTERING
ISOLATED STUDIES AND RESEARCH THROUGH THE AWARDING OF
FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS. THIS WAS AN EXTREMELY SENSIBLE
LINE TO FOLLOW SINCE IT ENABLED THE CREATION OF A
CRITICAL MASS OF PERSONS CAPABLE OF GIVING CONTINUITY
TO THE SECOND PHASE OF THIS PROCESS.
VEJA: IN GENERAL TERMS, WHAT IS THIS SECOND PHASE?
DION: IN THIS SECOND PHASE, THE CNPQ ACTS AS A POLITICAL
ORGAN HELPING THE SECRETARIAT OF PLANNING TO DETERMINE
AND DETAIL THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL POLICY.
THAT IS, IT ATTEMPTS TO OPTIMIZE THE UTILIZATION OF
THE MEANS - CREATING A SYSTEM, A GROUPING OF
PERSONS AND ORGANS THAT WILL WORK TOWARDS A FEW
COMMON OBJECTIVES. FOR EXAMPLE: THE NATIONAL
HOUSING BANK IS CHARGED WITH FINANCING BASIC
SANITATION. THE CNPQ WILL WORK OUT THE SPECIFIC
TECHNOLOGY AND HAND IT TO THE BANK THAT WILL PUT
IT TO USE JOINTLY WITH THE URBAN CENTERS. TOWARDS
THIS END, A MORE EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION WAS
ESTABLISHED CHANGING THE COUNCIL INTO AN AUTONOMOUS
PRIVATE FOUNDATION, WHICH ALLOWS THE CNPQ TO ACT
ALONG MORE DYNAMIC, MORE FLEXIBLE, MORE AGGRESSIVE
LINES.
VEJA: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CNPQ
AND THE MINISTRIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS?
DION: A BODY WAS CREATED BY LAW WITHIN THE COUNCIL
WHOSE SPECIFIC COMMITMENT IS TO ADJUDICATE MATTERS,
MAKE POLITICAL REVISIONS, AND COORDINATE R&D IN ALL
AREAS. IT IS COMPOSED OF 15 PERSONS FROM THE
GOVERNMENTAL AREA, AMONG WHICH THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE MINISTRIES OF MINES AND ENERGY, EDUCATION AND
CULTURE, HEALTH, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE,
COMMUNICATIONS, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARMED FORCES
GENERAL STAFF, AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL
BANK OF ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT (BNDE); AND OF
15 PROMINENT SCIENTISTS, TECHNOLOGISTS AND MANAGERS.
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VEJA: HOW DOES THE CNPQ JUDGE THE COUNTRY'S HEAVY
EXPENDITURES FOR THE IMPORTATION OF TECHNOLOGY?
DION: THIS SUBJECT HAS TO BE JUDGED UNDER TWO
ASPECTS: THE TIME HAS COME TO REDUCE THESE
EXPENDITURES; AND IT IS HIGH TIME ALSO THAT WE
MUST BE AWARE THAT WE MUST CREATE ALTERNATIVES TO
THE IMPORTATION OF TECHNOLOGY. A COUNTRY'S STRATEGY
CONSISTS, FIRST OF ALL, IN PREPARING A LISTING OF ITS

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OWN RESOURCES. EITHER THIS IS DONE WELL, OR THE COUNTRY CONTINUES COPYING AND COPIES BADLY.
VEJA: WHAT WOULD BE BRAZIL'S OPTIONS IN FORMULATING ITS OWN TECHNOLOGICAL POLICY?
DION: THERE ARE COUNTRIES, SUCH AS INDIA AND CHINA, THAT HAVE CHOSEN DEVELOPMENTAL ALTERNATIVES BY USING OUT-OF-DATE BUT LABOR-INTENSIVE TECHNOLOGY. THEY ALSO ACHIEVED AN INCENTIVE TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN TECHNOLOGY, STARTING FROM THIS THIRD-CLASS TECHNOLOGY. THESE OPTIONS, INDEPENDENTLY OF THE POLITICAL ASPECT, HAD A STRONG MOTIVATION - THE LACK OF FUNDS, WHICH IS A COMMON FACTOR AMONG THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. OUR WORK AT THE CNPQ IS TO VERIFY WHICH OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL METHODS APPLIES BETTER TO EACH SITUATION. IF WE THINK THAT A FIRST-CLASS TECHNOLOGY MUST BE UTILIZED, WE WILL ADVISE ITS USE. IF WE THINK THAT A SECOND OR THIRD CLASS TECHNOLOGY WILL WORK BETTER BECAUSE OF ITS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS, WE WILL ADVISE ACCORDINGLY.
VEJA: A LOT HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE DIVISION BETWEEN PURE RESEARCH AND THE NEEDS FOR TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC KNOW-HOW. WHAT ARE CNPQ'S PLANS IN THIS FIELD?
DION: OUR BASIC FUNCTION IS NOT TO GAMBLE THAT A GIVEN INSTITUTION WILL PRODUCE N MASTERS GRADUATES. THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE FINISHED PRODUCT. WHEN A SCIENTIST DEMONSTRATES THAT HE HAS BECOME AN EXCELLENT RESEARCHER AND HIS POTENTIALITIES ARE CONFIRMED, THEN OUR INTEREST IN HIM IS AROUSED.
DEXTER

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